

MINUTES of the 45th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the BLACKET ASSOCIATION held on Monday 17 November 2014 in the Salisbury Arms. Hazel Fletcher, as Chair, welcomed everyone again to an AGM in the Salisbury Arms for which there was an audience of approx 65 people. Copies of the Annual Report had previously been circulated by eMAIL – in addition, printed copies were also available at the AGM.

- 1. MINUTES** - The 2013 AGM minutes as published and circulated were agreed as an accurate record. David Stevenson proposed & Simon White seconded.
- 2. ELECTION of COMMITTEE and OFFICE BEARER** - Hazel Fletcher thanked the Committee Members who were stepping down, namely Alex Stobart, Ray Footman and Bob Cupples. Hugh Mackay was re-elected being nominated by Jan Chapman & seconded by Anne Sturrock. A new member of the Committee was added when Fiona Courtney was elected to the new role of Minutes Secretary – she was proposed by Jan Chapman & seconded by Wilma Cupples.
- 3. CHAIR'S REPORT** – The Chair introduced the Committee with their responsibilities for the 2014-2015 session, namely : Sheila McLeish (new residents); Johnny Kruuk (web & IT facilities); Fiona Courtney (Minutes); Becky Colegrave (Treasurer); Hugh Mackay (shrubbery & analyser of the weekly Planning reports); Richard Scothorne (planning support); Richard Seligman (planning support); & Ian Chisholm (Neighbourhood watch & newsletter editor). Hazel then went on to note the very sad loss of Karen Froebel Overton who had been ill for some time and who, until very recently, been an active member of the Committee.

The Owen Dudley Edwards talk on Arthur Conan Doyle and the Other Doyles had been extremely enjoyable as was the very successful Open Gardens evening – early volunteers for the 2015 event were encouraged to offer their gardens.

Johnny Kruuk is in the process of upgrading the website and would welcome any suggestions and greeting cards with the drawing of the pillars at Blacket Place done by former resident Catherine Gerrard are available from Sheila McLeish at £5 for four cards & envelopes.

In her capacity as the Blacket Association representative, the Chair attends the Grange & Prestonfield Community Council (GPCC) which meets about 10 times per annum. If there are matters which residents would like raised, then contact Hazel directly. In particular, there are some small “pots” of money available (beyond the larger budgets for programmed activities such as resurfacing East Mayfield) which may be made available for doing minor repairs on pavements or roads.

The Association had received several donations during the year. An embroidered wall hanging was on display – this was made and donated by a former resident, Mrs Lorna Plum. Another former resident, Joan Weir, had given an extremely interesting 1826 engraving of the Blacket area which was passed round the audience. Two more practical but no less welcome donations were a set of drawings done by Bertram Zank of what remains of the original railings and the gazebo used at the Open Gardens donated by Ray Footman – both of these are available by contacting the Committee.

Number 23B Minto Street (with its entrance on Mayfield Terrace) has been and remains a problem since the tenant moved out. A dangerous lean-to bucket store was eventually dismantled by the Council on safety grounds but without any formal permission from the owner or legal guardian, they will not take any other action. The Committee will pursue this matter.

- 4. PLANNING REPORT** – Richard Seligman provided the details of those applications for which the association had lodged objections. Regrettably most of these were eventually passed by the Council but he was hopeful that a better understanding could be reached with the Planning officers following the joint walkabout in the area, occasioned by the rancorous nature of the discussions with the Council regarding the “mews cottage” built in the grounds of 23 Minto Street.
- 5. TREASURER'S REPORT** - Speaking to her first set of accounts as Treasurer, Becky Colegrave indicated that there had been a good increase in the funds of the Association in the year resulting from the Doyle talk, the Open Gardens evening and sale of greeting cards – this will be aided in the

drop in website support costs, having been negotiated down by Johnny Kruuk. She encouraged any non-members to join and set up a standing order.

6. **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT** - Referring to the comments in the Annual Report, Ian Chisholm was pleased to note that the incidence of physical crimes such as break-ins had fallen. This is probably due to a combination of effects, namely the vigilance of the residents and the move to the more ephemeral on-line fraud and scams. Even the cold calling (against which there had been no appetite to set up a “no cold calling” zone as done by the Waverley Feuars) was moving more to the telephone or Internet but extreme care still had to be exercised.
7. **WORKING PARTY REPORT** – Having detailed the work done in the year in his report, Hugh Mackay invited comments from the audience. Simon White asked about the daffodils which had been planted previously but which had disappeared. Hugh, aided by Ian McLeish, gave the explanation that the 10,000 bulbs planted about seven years ago had rotted in the damp conditions to be found in the shrubbery beds which had not been appreciated at the time of planting.
8. **COCKBURN ASSOCIATION** – Richard Scothorne, who is the recently elected Council member tasked with defining the roles & relationships of the Cockburn Association, spoke briefly about his task and sought help from anyone who had a view on this. He pointed out that the Cockburn is one of the oldest conservation associations in Europe and its remit stretches from major developments through to commenting on changes to individual properties.

At the top end, it was instrumental in getting four storeys taken out of the planned (but yet unbuilt) Richard Murphy hotel building on the Morrison Street site. But at the other end of the scale, what should the Cockburn’s role be? Direct intervention or support for more locally focussed associations like the Blacket?

9. **BLACKET BOUNDARIES** – Hugh Mackay gave a brief description of this matter which he wanted to stress was not intended to impinge on the very good work of the West Blacket Association and also which was only at the consultation stage. This is aimed at removing the anomaly that the current Blacket Association area (the “five streets”) does not encompass all of the Blacket Conservation Area (CA) set up by Edinburgh Council in the 1970’s.

However this is a relatively small (yet architecturally important) part of the area – namely Salisbury Place, Spence Street and those parts of Dalkeith Road in the actual CA. Further this could be addressed by making active overtures to the residents in those areas to join the Association for which the Constitution is already set up to do.

10. **OTHER BUSINESS** – After 30 years doing the rounds in Blacket, John our delightful postman is retiring in February. Suggestions were sought how the Association could mark this.

A request was made to reprint more of the Elizabeth Blackadder cards for which the association has the original. Anne Sturrock suggested that Edinburgh be added to the description while Sheila McLeish indicated that the Association had probably made £1,000 over the years from the original 3,000 print run.

Ian Lewis was exasperated in reporting that Police Scotland will not actively police wrongful entry into Mayfield Terrace from Minto Street due to manpower issues.

Elsbeth Zank asked if the Council could be approached to put weight limits on truck using Blacket Avenue as a “rat run”.

Lastly Tanya Fox encouraged people to contact her if they were worried about the possible but uncertain detrimental effects of utility “smart meters”, for which there is a current UK wide initiative.

11. **SOCIAL EVENT** - The meeting having ended its formal stage, all participants enjoyed a convivial evening with refreshments provided by the Association.

The Blacket Association
Summary of accounts for year to 31st
August 2014

2013

2014

£1,723.94

Opening bank account 1st September

£1,552.61

Income

£510.00

Subscriptions

£575.00

£63.53

Open Gardens Event

£156.95

-

Card Sales

£46.05

-

Owen Dudley Edwards Event

£90.10

£40.00

Landscaping fundraising

£69.80

£613.53

£937.90

Expenditure

£385.00

AGM Costs

£420.00

£148.20

Website

£80.00

£51.25

Printing Newsletters

£7.60

-

Printing Blacket cards

£75.00

£120.41

Landscaping

£94.19

£80.00

Cockburn Association

-

£784.86

£676.79

(£171.33)

**Increase/(Decrease) in funds for
period**

£261.11

£1,552.61

Closing bank account 31st August

£1,813.72